

the objective in negotiating this free-trade agreement is reciprocity to a unilateral attitude. And more than having an addition or a subtraction of arithmetic operations, it is more a matter of taking up a vision, a view, in the medium term and in the long term. What is truly at stake is that a decision is being made as to what will happen with North America by the end of this century or beginning of the coming century.

We have to be competitive, vis-a-vis Europe and the Pacific Basin. And the only way of being it is by being together. And otherwise, it is not a matter of losing jobs for Mexico but spending the rest of your life buying Japanese or European products. So, as you can see, this is an exceptional, historic opportunity, and it will be very difficult for it to be repeated.

President Bush. Marlin, did you say one more?

One more. Charles [Charles Bierbauer, Cable News Network]?

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, you've repeatedly said that you have not encouraged the Kurds and the Shiites to rise up with the expectation that the U.S. would be in there fighting with them. And yet the Kurdish representatives this morning on one of the talk shows are saying that that's clearly the impression they got from listening to the Voice of Free

Iraq, which they understood to be supported by the U.S. Would you clarify just what the role the U.S. played in running that radio station?

President Bush. No, I don't have the details on it. But I will reassert, I never in any way implied that the United States was going to use force beyond the mandate of the United Nations.

Thank you all very—

Q. Well, is that because that station could be an embarrassment to you, sir?

President Bush. No, I just don't know the details of it. I just don't know the details of it. And if it had anything—

Q. Were they naive?

President Bush. Well, I mean, you call it whatever you want. They were not misled by the United States of America. And that is now I think very, very clear. I went back and reviewed every statement I made about this, every single one. And there was never any implication that the United States would use force to go beyond the objectives which we so beautifully have achieved. None. And I hope that helps clarify it.

Thank you all very much.

Note: President Bush's 79th news conference began at 11:51 a.m. in the Briefing Room at Ellington Field. President Salinas spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Marlin Fitzwater was Press Secretary to President Bush.

Remarks at a Meeting With Hispanic Business Leaders in Houston, Texas

April 8, 1991

Thank you all very much. And Miguel, thank you for your leadership for the Greater Houston Partnership. And to all of you who managed to get through security and struggle in here, why—[laughter]—apologies for the delay, but I'm sure glad to see you.

Even though these lights are bright, I can see many, many friendly faces out there, people with whom I've worked for one cause or another over the years. You have

this wonderful way of making a guy feel at home. So, thank you for coming. Lionel Sosa, I love those ads. They're terrific. I believe they're going to be very effective. And I thank you for your energy and your expertise and also would thank all of those who were helping you on this project.

To my old friend Bob Mosbacher, our able Secretary of Commerce, I'm glad to see him. He's slightly jet lagged out, having just returned from Japan on yet another

mission to try to encourage our exports, a mission in favor of free and fair trade—something we must continue to press for, whether it's halfway across the world or whether it's in relation to our own neighbors to the south. And Bob is doing a great job, a leadership role in fighting for free trade because he knows as I do, and as all of you do, that the freer the trade is, the more job opportunities there are for the people of the United States of America, say nothing of our trading partners. And so, I'm glad to see him back from his mission.

I've been looking forward to this meeting today. We've had a series of these, as some of you know. Some have attended one in Washington, then we had one out in California, and now this. Because I do want to discuss with you two issues that are vitally important to all of us: America's ability to compete in the global marketplace and our ability to negotiate with our trading partners. That's what's at stake right now. I've said many times that the hard work of freedom awaits us. And now, I'm asking for your help in that challenge.

I love the way that Mexico's very able President Carlos Salinas talked yesterday about the vision—the vision of free and fair trade between the two countries. It's a vision that we share. Last month, I asked Congress to support this Fast Track authority in trade negotiations. You see, Fast Track is a way of assuring our trading counterparts that the agreements that they reach with us at that bargaining table, the one they reach with our negotiators will be the same ones that Congress has a chance to vote on, up or down.

Some are alleging Congress has no say. And that's simply not true. Fast Track doesn't affect Congress' power to accept or reject trade agreements. But it does prevent these 11th-hour changes to agreements that have been hammered out, changes that force everyone to start all over again.

We need Fast Track authority to pursue vital trade objectives: the North American free-trade agreement, the Uruguay round, and the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative. If we lose our Fast Track authority, we lose any hope of achieving these three vital agreements, the North American free-trade agreement, the Uruguay round, and

the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative. We lose trade, we lose jobs, and we jeopardize economic growth.

Here's the key: A vote against Fast Track is a vote against things that we all hold dear, prosperity at home and growth in other lands. It ignores the dramatic and wonderful changes in the world economy. We want to play a leading role in that emerging, exciting world, and we don't want to hide from it. We want to join in the thrilling business of innovation, and we do not want to chain people to outmoded technologies and ideas.

Right now, we have the chance to expand opportunity and economic growth from the Yukon to the Yucatan. Think of it. The North American free-trade agreement would link us with our largest trading partner, Canada, and our third-largest trading partner, Mexico. It would create the largest, richest trade zone on Earth: 360 million consumers in a market that generates \$6 trillion in output in a single year.

A unified North American market would let each of our countries build on our own strengths. It would provide more and better jobs for U.S. workers. Let me repeat that one: It would provide more and better jobs for U.S. workers. It would stimulate price competition, lower consumer prices, improve product quality. The agreement would make necessities such as food and clothing more affordable, more available to our poorest citizens. It would raise productivity and produce a higher standard of living throughout the continent.

Let me illustrate the stakes involved in the Fast Track debate by discussing the Mexican component of the North American free-trade agreement. Trade with Mexico has helped both our countries.

Just 4 years ago, we had a \$4.9 billion trade deficit with Mexico. Since then, we've cut that deficit by two-thirds, to \$1.8 billion. This turnaround took place in part because Mexico's President believes in free trade. He's slashed tariff rates for some goods from 100 percent to 10 percent. One result: our exports to Mexico have increased 130 percent in the past 4 years. This export boom has created more than 300,000 new jobs

here in the United States of America. And each additional billion dollars in exports creates 20,000 new jobs here in the United States.

I don't have to tell anyone in this room about Mexico's market potential: 85 million consumers who want to buy our goods. Nor do I have to tell you that as Mexico grows and prospers, it will need even more of the goods we're best at producing: computers, manufacturing equipment, high-tech and high-value products.

Unfortunately, we've got a tough fight ahead of us. Some Members of Congress are concerned about the potential impact that any agreement may have on American jobs, American companies, American exports. Other Members of Congress say that they worry about wage rates or environmental quality, health and safety issues. I believe, I firmly believe, that concern about those very same issues is the strongest argument for support for Fast Track.

Let me just talk about those concerns. We've already seen what the reduction in Mexican tariffs has done for our exports, American exports to Mexico. A free-trade agreement would eliminate the remaining tariffs entirely. And that would stimulate exports, create new jobs, generate wealth, and hope, I might add, on both sides of the border.

Let's take a look at the impact on American companies. When trade barriers vanish, goods flow freely across borders. And everybody—businessmen and workers, to farmers and consumers—reaps the benefits of growth.

Consider the environment. The North American free-trade agreement fits into a winning strategy of improving environmental quality. Opponents of Fast Track and the trade pacts forget that prosperity offers the surest road to worker safety, public health, and indeed, environmental quality.

This administration wants to ensure that Mexican economic growth goes hand in hand with the environmental protection. Our EPA is already assisting the Salinas government with its environmental programs. President Salinas has shown that he's serious about cleaning up the environment by requiring all new cars to have catalytic converters. And recently I'm sure all of us

noticed with pride and pleasure the fact that he shut down Mexico's largest oil refinery because, frankly, it was just too much pollution into the air. I know that President Salinas cares deeply about his nation and its people and that he means business when he says he wants to clean up Mexico's air and water.

And finally, consider the matter of working conditions in Mexico. As our trade with Mexico has grown, so have the wages of Mexican workers. Indeed, Mexican wages have risen very quickly in recent years, with no tangible impact on America's pay scales. That being the case, someone ought to ask the opponents of Fast Track why they oppose prosperity in Mexico.

Someone should ask why they oppose letting our neighbors enjoy the benefits of progress. These are our friends. These are our neighbors. Ask them what's wrong with increased productivity throughout the whole continent. We benefit when others in this continent prosper. And ask them what's wrong with a more stable Mexico. A free-trade pact would encourage investment, would create jobs, would lift wages, and give talented Mexican citizens opportunities that they don't enjoy today. A stronger Mexico, in turn, means a stronger United States; it means a stronger North American alliance.

So, you see, we have much to gain from extending Fast Track: a new era of open, free and fair trade, a future of unprecedented economic growth and regional harmony. As with most good things in life, competition involves risk. But we always have been a nation of risktakers, of adventurers. Our forefathers transformed a rough wilderness into an industrial superpower. We've created technologies and products unlike any others produced in human history. We've placed the wisdom of the ages within reach of anyone who can operate a computer.

The vote on Fast Track is really a vote on what kind of America we want to build. A "yes" vote expresses confidence in American know-how and ingenuity. I say we believe in ourselves.

I want to make clear that this isn't a partisan political issue. I want to salute those Democratic leaders in the United States

Apr. 8 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

Congress, including our own Senator Lloyd Bentsen, who's a key player in this debate, and others in the House—Speaker Foley—who have the vision to say this is good for the United States and it's good for Mexico. I'm going to approach this strictly in a non-partisan, nonpolitical manner. It is too important to get it bogged down in partisan politics. I take great pride in the fact that the relationship between Mexico and the United States has never been better. But it is my view that we owe Mexicans the opportunity that they will get from Fast Track. And when they get that opportunity it is going to benefit the United States of America.

And so, I will be fighting my heart out to win passage of this. I was very privileged to receive for the second time in Houston the able President of Mexico yesterday. He's doing a first-class job. He's moved that country in ways that some of his critics would never dared dream possible. And I think that it is in our interest now to build on this improved and strengthened relationship to give them and give ourselves the benefit of free and fair trade.

So, as we join a world that is linked primarily by economic—not military—competition, we have nothing to fear except

the fearmongers themselves. They seem to be the only ones who haven't learned lately that defeatism produces defeat, while confidence and self-reliance produce greatness. We've got to seize the opportunities that this new world economy offers us. And with your help, I am absolutely convinced that we will do it.

So, once again, thank you for coming. And I pledge to each and every one of you that this goal is so important to the United States that it will be priority with me, with Secretary Mosbacher, with every other member of the Bush administration in Washington, DC. We are going to win this fight. But we need your help. Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8:30 a.m. in the Evergreen Room at the Houstonian Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Miguel San Juan, vice president, world trade division, Greater Houston Partnership; Lionel Sosa, who produced a video shown prior to the President's remarks; Secretary of Commerce Robert A. Mosbacher; President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico; Senator Lloyd Bentsen; and Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Remarks on Presenting a Point of Light Award to the Voice of Hope Ministries in Dallas, Texas

April 8, 1991

Let me just say Barbara and I are delighted to be here. In the first place, I want to salute all at the Dallas Naval Air Station, and say it's a pleasure to be back.

But today what I wanted to do here in this very brief period of time was to salute those that are gathered here not only to commemorate this 50th anniversary of the Dallas Naval Air Station but also to recognize the volunteers of the Voice of Hope Ministries as the 424th daily Point of Light. I think the name is well chosen, for you bring to the citizens of this corner of Dallas what they need most, and that is a sense of hope, the belief that every community can be reborn and that everyone can suc-

ceed.

Having known a life of poverty herself, Kathy Dudley was determined to help others overcome the hardships that she had experienced. And she founded Voice of Hope Ministries in 1982. And when you began, you had only a dilapidated, abandoned school for a meeting place. With hard work and faith in God and in yourselves, you've transformed that building into a thriving community center full of love and support for all who seek it.

Through your programs to enrich the lives of young people and seniors, your literacy and financial management programs